



WILD ANIMAL REHABILITATION PERMITS

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife

This free permit is given to take in sick, injured, or orphaned wild animals (includes mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds) with the intent of releasing them back into the wild. Migratory birds, including waterfowl, songbirds and raptors, are federally protected and can be taken in for rehabilitation only under the authority of a Special Purpose Rehabilitation Permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with a state permit. Live wild animals protected by law and regulated by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources cannot be possessed in captivity except with a valid license or permit unless taken and possessed under legal hunting and trapping seasons with the proper license (unless exempt from a license).

Wild animal rehabilitators have to be able to administer basic first aid and care for wild animals in manner that will enable the animals to survive on their own in the wild. Wild animals are different from domestic animals and require specialized knowledge pertaining to their habitat in the wild, nutritional requirements, behavioral issues and caging requirements. The animals should be held in captivity only long enough until they can live on their own in the wild, and every effort should be made to limit human contact and prevent the taming of the wild animal taken in for rehabilitation. Additionally, wild animals carry diseases that may be transmitted to humans and domestic animals; they can also pose additional dangers to those who handle them.

How can I become a licensed rehabilitator?

The basic qualifications require one (1) year of hands-on experience with another licensed rehabilitator, animal shelter, zoo or veterinarian. In order to obtain a permit, you must fill out an application form that includes providing a complete description of the education and training or experience that you have received. The education or training should include the proper care, handling and rehabilitation of wild animals. If you worked with another rehabilitator, you must indicate the name of the person and the length of time for which you provided assistance. References may be checked. You can also become a licensed rehabilitator if you have a degree in a wildlife-related field or veterinary medicine. You must also work with a licensed veterinarian who will be willing to assist you with the medical treatment and care of the wild animals when needed. The veterinarian must sign the initial application form. A licensed wild animal rehabilitator can only administer pharmaceutical products approved by state and federal laws for the purpose or prevention of malnutrition, illness, disease, injury, or stress in wild animals. Furthermore, they can only be administered in accordance with state and federal laws. Wild animal that are taken in for rehabilitation cannot be spayed or neutered. A description of the rehabilitation facilities, equipment and supplies is required. This list should include: cages (including their sizes), medical supplies, food sources, intensive care units, and aviaries (if applicable). The cage descriptions shall provide internal dimensions and specify the materials used for flooring, walls and perches. A DNR conservation officer may inspect your facilities and any records relative to this permit.

What reference materials do I need to have?

Reference materials must be relative to wildlife rehabilitation and be in your possession at your facility. Reference materials must include literature specific to the care, housing, medical treatment and nutritional requirements of the wild animals you wish to take in for rehabilitation. Internet access is not sufficient since it cannot be verified. Suggested materials include the books listed below. Contact the following for ordering information: National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association, (320) 259-4086, www.nwrawildlife.org and the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council at (707) 864-1761, www.iwrc-online.org.

Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation, by A.T. Moore & S. Joosten

Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, available from the National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association

Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation, by Jan White, DVM

Healers of the Wild, by S.K. Jacobs

Feeding and Nutrition of Wildlife, by J. Perlman and A. MacLeod

Squirrel Rehabilitation Handbook, by S. Casey and A. Casey

Where can I release the animals?

Mammals and reptiles should be released near the location where they were found. A wild animal that is taken in for rehabilitation must be released or kept under another permit if non-releasable (only if approval is given by the DNR).

A wild animal taken in for rehabilitation can be given to another licensed rehabilitator for additional care, if needed, but the total length of time in captivity should not exceed 180 days. The animals cannot be sold or given to game breeders.

Furthermore, the wild animals should be released only on property for which you have permission. City, county, state and federal properties require permission of the property manager or may not allow the release of wild animals on their property.

What can I do with the animal if it is not-releasable within 180 days?

As a condition of the rehabilitation permit, wild animals taken in for rehabilitation are to be released within 180 days. If you intend to possess a wild animal beyond this 180-day rehabilitation period, a conservation officer must be contacted as to the disposition. Reasonable extensions may be made to facilitate release back into the wild if approved by a conservation officer prior to elapse of the conditional timeframe (180 days). The time of year and extensive injuries are factors that will be taken into consideration for the release of the wild animals.

The following options are available for non-releasable wild animals:

- 1) Some species of mammals, birds and reptiles can be retained under an educational permit. The educational permit has to be approved and issued by the Division of Fish and Wildlife for that specific animal that is non-releasable and/or permanently injured. Educational permits are not issued for animals undergoing rehabilitation. For birds protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a state and federal educational permit is required to possess a bird longer than 180 days.
- 2) Mammals, except for white-tailed deer and protected species of bats, that have been determined to be non-releasable, may also be possessed under a wild animal possession permit. The wild animal possession permit can be obtained after submitting an application that includes a successfully completed inspection by a conservation officer and approval from the Division of Fish and Wildlife.
- 3) White-tailed deer and mammals, reptiles or birds determined to be non-releasable and not possessed under an educational permit or wild animal possession permit should be euthanized. It is the responsibility of the rehabilitator to cause the animal to be euthanized. Non-releasable white-tailed deer must be euthanized and cannot be possessed under any other permit.

What species of birds can I take in for rehabilitation?

Only English or house sparrows, European starlings and feral pigeons can be taken without a federal or state permit. All other species of migratory birds, including songbirds, raptors and waterfowl can be taken in for rehabilitation only if you possess a Special Purpose Rehabilitation Permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Until you obtain a federal permit or become a sub-permittee under someone else's federal permit, you cannot take in any birds for rehabilitation; you can only transport birds to another federally licensed rehabilitator. In order to obtain a federal rehabilitation permit, you will need to contact the USFWS Migratory Bird Permit Office at 612-713-5436 or check the website at: <http://permits.fws.gov/mbpermits/birdbasics.html>. (Click on "Special Purpose-Rehabilitation" under the non-eagle permits for the application form.)

Who do I contact for more information about state regulations?

Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife
Attn: Linnea Petercheff
402 W. Washington St., Rm W273
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2781
(317) 233-6527; e-mail: lpetercheff@dnr.in.gov

Who do I contact for more information about obtaining a federal permit?

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird Permit Office
BHW Federal Building
1 Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056

(612) 713-5436; <http://permits.fws.gov/mbpermits/birdbasics.html>